11: League of Nations--68 G-5 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 312, 364

"Lastly, in Laos, the centres of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang, which already have a supply of drinking-water obtained in the one case from wells and in the other form a spring, are extending and modernising their plant."

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.